



## **Civics Education Introduction**

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[www.socialstudies.org](http://www.socialstudies.org)  
[@NCSSNetwork](https://twitter.com/NCSSNetwork)



## **What Exactly is “Social Studies”?**

NCSS defines social studies as **"the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence."**

Within the school program, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences.


In essence, social studies promotes knowledge of and involvement in civic affairs. And because civic issues--such as health care, crime, and foreign policy--are multidisciplinary in nature, understanding these issues and developing resolutions to them require multidisciplinary education.

Source: National Council for the Social Studies, <http://www.socialstudies.org/about>.





## Social Studies Course Requirements\*



Total Courses	Social Studies Overall	History	Geography	Civics	Economics
0 courses	0%	0%	30%	3%	7%
1 course	0%	19%	67%	94%	91%
2 courses	2%	51%	2%	2%	1%
3 courses	39%	25%	1%	0%	1%
4+ courses	59%	5%	1%	0%	0%

\*Percent of Educators

Findings from My College Options®/NCSS research study (2017): National sample includes 52,525 high school students in social studies classrooms and 827 social studies educators.



## Academic Skills Development in Social Studies Classes

Almost 95% of students in social studies classes report gaining academic skills as a result of their social studies coursework.



**65%** Ability to form and support an opinion



**61%** Critical thinking



**57%** Ability to evaluate concepts/ideas



**55%** Reading comprehension



**53%** Ability to navigate online and text sources to find information



**44%** Ability to present information in a clear/concise manner



## Civic Benefits Gained in Social Studies Classes

Nearly all students, 97%, report gaining civic benefits in social studies classes.

Knowledge  
of world  
events

83%

Understanding  
my role as  
a citizen

54%

43%

Understanding  
career options and  
the economy

48%

Ability to  
understand  
politics

28%

Interest in  
becoming  
involved in the  
community



## Top Three Social Studies Program Additions Desired by Students

1. More field trips to museums/historical sites

2. New guest speakers from the community

3. More service learning/community service opportunities



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## **Proven Practices in Civic Learning**

1. Classroom Instruction
2. Discussion of Current Events and Controversial Issues
3. Service Learning
4. Extracurricular Activities
5. Student Participation in School Governance
6. Simulations of Democratic Processes

Source: The Lenore Annenberg Institute for Civics of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania and the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools*



## **In Development: Action Civics Initiative**

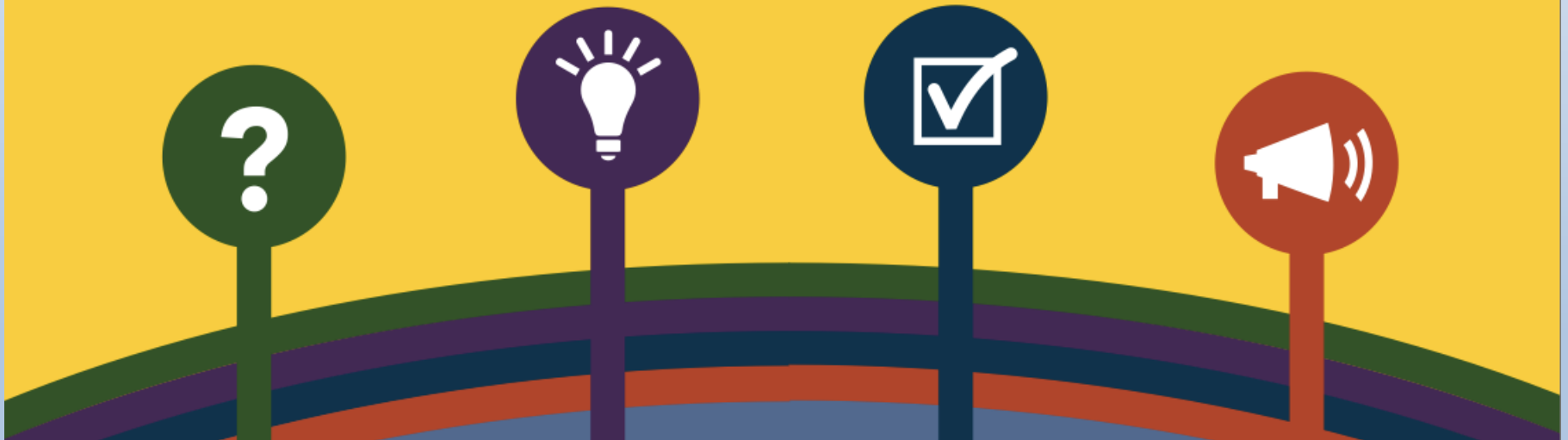
- Non-partisan network of 32 organizations.
- Since June 2016, it has identified nearly 300 schools and communities across 37 states that are currently offering exemplary versions of action civics.
- Promotes 4 four strategies based on community needs:
  - Student voice
  - Deliberation
  - Real-world interactions with civic officials and processes
  - Strong instructor support



Action Civics Initiative Network Organizations

The American Bar Association	Facing History and Ourselves	The National Constitution Center
American Federation of Teachers	The Florida Joint Center For Citizenship	National Council for the Social Studies
The Albert Shanker Institute	Generation Citizen	Opportunity Youth United
ASCD	iCivics	Pearson
The Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools	The Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life	Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation
The Center for Civic Education	The Lou Frey Institute of Politics & Government	Street Law, Inc.
The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning & Engagement	The MacArthur Foundation Research Network on Youth and Participatory Politics	Student Voice
The Civic Engagement Research Group	The McCormick Foundation	Teach For America
The Constitutional Rights Foundation	The Mikva Challenge	Tennessee Center for Civic Learning and Engagement
Discovering Justice	National Association of Secondary School Principals	Youth Build
Earth Force	National Association of Student Councils	

COLLEGE CAREER & CIVIC LIFE  
**FRAMEWORK**  
FOR SOCIAL STUDIES STATE STANDARDS



Published by the National Council for the Social Studies in September 2013.

<http://www.socialstudies.org/c3/>

***College, Career and Civic Life = “C3”***

# C3 Inquiry Arc

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- **Dimension 1:** Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries
- **Dimension 2:** Applying Disciplinary Tools and Concepts (Civics, Economics, Geography, and History)
- **Dimension 3:** Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence
- **Dimension 4:** Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action



## **Solutions**

- **Engage others**

How is civic education taught in our school?

Where is it beyond the formal curriculum?

- **Find and support organizations** with missions for social studies and civic learning.
- **Ask a child** what they're learning in social studies.

## NCSS Advocacy Resources

- Advocacy and Policy webpage:  
<http://www.socialstudies.org/advocacy>
- VoterVoice form (open to all):  
<https://www.votervoice.net/NCSS/campaigns/49475/respond>

We're all concerned about how our students show civic competence! Ask others how to turn this concern into a specific action.

***If it's important to you, it's important to them!***

## THANK YOU!

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